



BROOKLYN'S IN THE HOUSE

NEWS FROM CONGRESSWOMAN YVETTE D. CLARKE

11th CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

Representing: Brownsville, Ocean Hill, Crown Heights, Greater Flatbush, East Flatbush, Kensington, Park Slope, Carroll Gardens, Gowanus, Prospect Heights, Prospect Gardens, Grand Army Plaza, Windsor Terrace, Flatbush and Midwood

December 18, 2009

Rep. Clarke Fights for Comprehensive Immigration Reform



Dear Neighbor,

I would like to wish everyone in the 11th Congressional District of New York a joyful holiday season and a healthy and happy New Year!

This will be the last weekly newsletter for the year. The weekly newsletter will commence on January 15, 2010. **In the meantime, if you have any concerns or comments, please feel free to contact my office at 718.287.1142.**

I know that many families across our district are struggling and are feeling the effects of this recession. I want to remind the citizens of Brooklyn, New York that every time we have faced hardship or adversity as a nation, we have always been resilient. Whether through the Great Depression, the September 11th terrorist attacks, or through our current economic crisis, working together, we will demonstrate our resiliency and ingenuity to overcome our adversities.

Sincerely,
Yvette D. Clarke

On Tuesday, December 15, I was honored to join Congressman Luis V. Gutierrez (D-IL) when he presented his new legislation, the "Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity" (CIR A.S.A.P.), in Congress. I am a proud original co-sponsor of this legislation because I know that the time is now to fix our broken immigration system. It is also time to expand the face of the CIR debate. Everyone's voices must be heard, particularly the voices of the immigrant communities of the African Diaspora. When we turn our backs on those who come to these shores to become Americans, to be a part of building our great nation, and to embrace the American Dream, we are turning our back on ourselves. We must never forget that this debate is critical

to American citizens, American businesses, and the lives of those who seek to be Americans. The "Comprehensive Immigration Reform for America's Security and Prosperity" (CIR A.S.A.P.) Act of 2009 includes:

- The DREAM Act;
- Smart and humane interior enforcement;
- Provisions for an agreement between labor and agribusiness;
- An employment eligibility verification system;
- Protective measures for the labor rights of immigrants and non-immigrants; and
- Measures for the promotion of immigrant integration.



Rep. Clarke joins Rep. Valezquez and Rep. Jared Polis in the Comprehensive Immigration Reform press conference



Rep. Clarke meets with C.U.S.H. after the CIR press conference

I am fighting to ensure that the CIR debate encompasses all those affected by our broken immigration system. I am happy to be joined in the fight for CIR by Bishop Findlayter and Churches United to Save and Heal (C.U.S.H), Chung-Wha Hong and the NY immigration Coalition, Sandy Placido, and the Northern Manhattan Coalition For Immigrant Rights. As Congress drafts immigration legislation, advocacy groups, religious leaders, individual stakeholders, and all levels of government must come together and push for comprehensive immigration reform.

We must make sure that President Barack Obama and Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano are supported in their commitment to comprehensive action. Congress must also do its part to move comprehensive immigration reform legislation early next year.

Congresswoman Yvette D. Clarke Casts Vote to Create Jobs and Provide Emergency Relief to Americans

On Wednesday, December 15th, I joined the House of Representatives in passing *H.R. 2847, the Jobs for Main Street Act* with a vote of 217 to 212. This bill creates and saves more jobs by making targeted investments in areas that will grow our economy over the long term, including highways, public transit, construction, and small businesses.

As a Member of the House Small Business Committee, I truly believe that small businesses are the economic engine to job growth in our nation. The bill includes several key initiatives to help America's small businesses create jobs by expanding the federal guarantee for banks that lend to small businesses and eliminating fees on Small Business Administration (SBA) loans. By making small business loans more accessible and affordable, we can spur the creation of thousands of jobs.

The Jobs for Main Street Act invests \$48 billion to help put people back to work rebuilding our roads and bridges, modernizing public buildings and mass transit, and cleaning our air and water. This bill also extends emergency unemployment benefits, helps with health benefits for those out of work through COBRA, protects health care coverage for millions through Medicaid, and cuts taxes for the families of 16 million children by making the Child Tax Credit available to all low-income working families with children in 2010.

As of October, the unemployment rate sat at 10.3 percent in New York City. While I am optimistic about early economic indicators pointing to a recovery, many New Yorkers are still having a hard time finding jobs. This bill creates smart, targeted investments that will build a solid foundation for long term economic growth. With the passage of this bill, I am confident that the great state of New York and this nation is headed towards economic prosperity.

Rep. Clarke Secures Critical Funds for Brooklyn

Through the appropriations process, I have been able to secure nearly \$38 million in federal appropriations dollars to help revitalize the local economy and enhance the quality of life for Brooklynites. I am proud to have secured these critical funds for my constituents. In addition to creating jobs, these funds will be used by community organizations to provide vital services and resources for Brooklyn's neediest families. The funds will protect our city from the threat of terrorist attacks and invests in green technology research to reduce our nation's dependence on fossil fuels. The conscientious use of federal resources designated for local projects of high public importance can have great benefits for the 11th Congressional District in Brooklyn, New York State, and our nation. Some of the recipients of the funds include:

- **City of New York Police Department: \$20,000,000**
- **Brownsville Community Development Corporation: \$400,000**
- **Central Brooklyn Housing Contractor Association: \$150,000**
- **Brooklyn College: \$900,000**
- **Brooklyn Botanic Garden: \$400,000**
- **Brooklyn Academy of Music: \$200,000**

Social Security Administration Sends Incorrect Payment Date Notices

Earlier this month, the Social Security Administration sent out erroneous notices containing incorrect payment dates for January 2010. According to the Social Security Administration, they were sent out to nearly 6 million beneficiaries who receive their payments on either the second, third, or fourth Wednesday of each month, and are part of the annual benefit notices that go to 52 million Social Security beneficiaries. It is important that residents understand that the payment date is shown as one week before what the actual date of payment will be, which is incorrect. Other information in the notice includes the payment amount which is correct. Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security, has already released a statement of regret for the incorrect notices and assures Social Security beneficiaries that he is diligently working to fix the problem. I am advising all of my residents who receive these social security benefits to expect to get a letter from the Social Security Administration detailing the mistake in the notice.

Legislative Spotlight

I recently became a proud cosponsor of H.R. 2254, the Agent Orange Equity Act of 2009. This bill would clarify the laws related to VA benefits provided to Vietnam War veterans suffering from the ravages of Agent Orange exposure. The Department of Veterans Affairs has recognized certain cancers and other health problems associated with exposure to Agent Orange and other herbicides, which include:

- Acute and Subacute Transient Peripheral Neuropathy
- AL Amyloidosis
- B Cell Leukemias
- Chloracne
- Chronic Lymphocytic Leukemia
- Diabetes Mellitus (Type 2)
- Hodgkin's Disease
- Ischemic Heart Disease
- Multiple Myeloma
- Non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma
- Parkinson's Disease
- Porphyria Cutanea Tarda
- Prostate Cancer
- Respiratory Cancers
- Soft Tissue Sarcoma (other than Osteosarcoma, Chondrosarcoma, Kaposi's sarcoma, or Mesothelioma)

H.R. 2254 is intended to clarify the law so that Blue Water veterans and every service member awarded the Vietnam Service medal, or who otherwise deployed to land, sea or air, in the Republic of Vietnam is fully covered by the comprehensive Agent Orange laws Congress passed in 1991. If enacted, this bill will make it easier for VA to process Vietnam War veterans' claims for service-connected conditions that are linked to toxic exposures during the Vietnam War and that are identified in current law.

We have an estimated 14,000 veterans in the 11th Congressional District of New York. Many of these veterans have served honorably in the Vietnam War and are suffering from the effects of their exposure to Agent Orange. As their Representative in Congress and a proud American, I believe it's my duty to ensure that our veterans receive the benefits that they deserve. Rest assured that I will work with my colleagues to ensure that our nation fulfills its obligation to the Vietnam Veterans of America.